

2007-2008 CHARTER ISSUE SUMMARY

Qualifications for Elections Director and Assessor

Issue subject: Should we explicitly permit additional qualifications to be established by ordinance for the offices of Assessor and/or Elections Director.

Issue raised by: During subcommittee deliberations, commissioners raised the issue of providing more rigorous qualifications for the offices of the Assessor and/or Elections Director in order to hold the office to a higher level of transparency and accountability and ensure that the right person would be in the position whether they are elected or appointed.

Description of issue: Currently, in sections 340.50 and section 630, the Charter provides language that the county administrative officer, and the chief officers appointed by county executive shall be appointed based on abilities, qualifications, integrity, and prior experience concerning the duties of the office.

In addition, in Section 630 general qualifications are laid out for the position of Sheriff which include age, citizenship, voter registration, and district. Section 630 provides language where additional qualifications for the office of Sheriff can be established by ordinance.

Summary of arguments for and against:

Pro: Having additional qualifications for the Assessor and Elections Director would provide for a more rigorous screening process for the position, ensuring a qualified candidate, protecting the position from the elections process

Con: Specific qualifications might rule out available candidates, though these issues could be addressed in drafting any ordinance authorized by this amendment.

Subcommittee Recommendations: The Governmental Structure Subcommittee looked at two options in terms of charter language that would allow for additional qualifications to be established by ordinance. The Subcommittee picked option 1.

Suggested Charter Revision:

OPTION ONE

340.50 Qualifications.

The county administrative officer and the chief officers appointed by either the county executive or the county administrative officer shall be appointed on the basis of their abilities, qualifications, integrity and prior experience concerning the duties of the office to which they shall be appointed. Additional qualifications for the manager of the elections division may be established by ordinance.

Section 630 Qualifications.

Each county officer holding an elective office shall be, at the time of his appointment or election and at all times while he holds office, at least twenty-one years of age, a citizen of the United States and a resident and registered voter of King County; and each councilman shall be a resident of the district which he represents. Any change in the boundaries of a councilman's district which shall cause him to be no longer a resident of the district which he represents shall not disqualify him from holding office during the remainder of the term for which he was elected or appointed. Additional qualifications of the office of sheriff, (office of the assessor,) or the director of elections, may be established by ordinance

OPTION TWO**Section 630 Qualifications.**

Each county officer holding an elective office shall be, at the time of his appointment or election and at all times while he holds office, at least twenty-one years of age, a citizen of the United States and a resident and registered voter of King County; and each councilman shall be a resident of the district which he represents. Any change in the boundaries of a councilman's district which shall cause him to be no longer a resident of the district which he represents shall not disqualify him from holding office during the remainder of the term for which he was elected or appointed. Additional qualifications of the office of sheriff, ~~;~~ (office of the assessor;) or the chief elected or appointed elections officer may be established by ordinance.